

Focus on Reading 2: How Children Saved the River

Grade 11 English

Pre-Reading: Forming a General Picture

Read the first two paragraphs of "How Children Saved the River" to answer these questions.

1. Which river? Where?
2. Which children?
3. Why did the river need "saving"?

Reading:

How children saved the river

By Ma Guihua

A The Funan River flows through Chengdu City, a cultural and economic centre in southwest China with a population of 3 million. In the 1950s the water had been so clear that fish could be seen from the bank; it was also an area where people could enjoy swimming and angling. By the 1980s the water in the river was too dirty for washing, and it was giving off a foul smell.

B The first call to do something about the pollution came from pupils at Chengdu's Longjianglu Primary School in 1985. After a one-day field study of the river, they sent a letter to the (then) mayor, describing how they had seen people dumping dirty water and rubbish into the river. Waste was also discharged into the river from a paper mill, a hospital and strongbox factory.

C The children appealed to all city residents to stop dumping garbage in the river and to treat industrial waste before discharging it into the water. In reply, the children received a hand-written letter from the mayor, who spoke highly of their love for, and care of the river. Local media published their letter, accompanied by a commentary praising the pupils' initiative.

Students from other schools followed their example.

D Further encouragement for change came two years later when Xiong Xiaoli, a correspondent of Xinhua News Agency, prepared an in-depth report. That summer he had taken his six-year-old son to the river. Afterwards the child developed a high fever and had a rash all over his body. The doctor blamed the polluted water that might contain parasites. Deeply shocked, Xiong immediately started a two-week investigation, bicycling along the entire length of the river within the city limits. His report went direct to the leaders of the central government.

E In 1992 the city government acted. It invested 2.7 billion yuan (\$320 million) in a 5-year comprehensive revitalization project for the Funan River. A total of 488 polluting factories were closed



Funan River after its revitalization

down while 478 others were ordered to update their waste disposal technology. The remaining 40 were moved to an industrial park in a suburban area. A 16-kilometre river course was dredged¹ and nearly all the banks were rebuilt or consolidated². Shanty towns³ along the river were all pulled down to make way for grassland.

F To remind people of environmental protection, white stones were placed on the grassland with carved characters reading 'Don't hurt me' or 'You protect me, I protect you, we protect the Earth'. A Flowing Water Garden was set up by the river to give visitors a demonstration of how water from the Funan River is cleaned through the presence of healthy vegetation. Now with clean water, tidy dams, green lawns and open parks, the Funan River has been acclaimed a 'green necklace around the neck of Chengdu'. The riverside is a new attraction for sightseeing, recreation, wedding ceremonies and morning exercises.

G Having come this far, the city government now has more ambitions for the Funan River. To save precious water resources, the construction of a large water-treatment project of 200 million yuan (\$24 million), which will channel the water upstream for reuse, has started. Longjianglu Primary School has also launched its own environment education programme, which encourages students to participate regularly in activities to monitor the pollution of the river and campaign for keeping it clean.

¹ dredge: to dig up mud from the bottom of a river

² consolidate: to make stronger or more effective

³ shanty town: a very poor area where people live in small houses they've built from waste materials.

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Post Reading Questions:

Questions 1-3:

Choose **Three** letters A-F.

Which **Three** of the following did the school children do?

- A. They visited other primary schools.
- B. They went swimming in the river.
- C. They wrote a letter to tyne mayor.
- D. They praised the local media.
- E. They spent a day studying the river.
- F. They asked the people of Chengdu to keep the river clean.

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Questions 4-9

Do the following statements agree with information in the text?

Write:

True	if the statement agrees with the information
FALSE	if the statement contradicts the information
Not Given	if there is no information on this

- 4. Xiong Xiaoli worked as a journalist
- 5. Xiong became ill after visiting the Funan River
- 6. His doctor had no idea what had caused the illness.
- 7. The weather was unusually hot at the time.
- 8. Xiong spent two weeks studying the river.

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Questions 9-11

Choose **THREE** letters A-F

Which letters **THREE** of the following did the city government do>

- A. It removed the shanty town beside the river.
- B. It invested 2.7 billion yuan in an education programme.
- C. It cleaned a long section of the river and repaired most of the banks.
- D. It closed down all the factories along the river.
- E. It placed advertisements for environmental protection in the papers.
- F. It created a water garden near the river

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Question 12

Choose the correct letter A-D

12. What additional project has the city government recently begun?

- A. a new primary school.
- B. a new environment education programme
- C. a new water treatment works
- D. a new campaign to keep the river clean.

12	
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